CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) A bending press for bending metal plates in the production of pipe, comprising:

a press bed formed with a lower die against which a metal plate can be pressed to bend said plate;

a bending ram extending over the length of said lower die and formed with an upper die of downwardly convex shape engageable with said plate to press said plate against said lower die under said plate; and

an articulation for said upper die, said articulation for said upper die including a pivot having a pivot axis extending parallel to said lower die between said upper die and a foot of said ram and forming a pivot axis for said upper die close to an upper surface of said plate.

2. (Canceled)

3. (currently amended) The bending press defined in claim [[2]] 1 wherein said articulation includes a pivot for said ram at an upper end thereof having a pivot axis parallel to said die.

4. (Canceled)

5. (currently amended) The bending press defined in claim [[4]] 3, further comprising at least one force-restoring member braced to bias said upper die back into an original position upon displacement of said upper die about said articulation.

6. (Original) The bending press defined in claim 5 wherein said upper die is articulated on said ram, said force-restoring member including a spring braced between said ram and said upper die.

7. (Original) The bending press defined in claim 5 wherein said ram is formed with said articulation at an upper end thereof and said force-restoring member is braced across said articulation.

8. (Original) The bending press defined in claim 5 wherein said force-restoring member includes a pair of springs.

9. (Original) The bending press defined in claim 1 wherein said ram comprises a generally upright plate of substantially uniform wall thickness over its height.

10. Canceled

11. (Original) A method of bending a metal plate in the formation of large diameter pipe comprising the steps of repeatedly

pressing a metal plate by an upper die at the bottom of a ram driven by a press head from above against a lower die on a press bed and in which the upper and lower die extend over the length of the plate to bend the plate;

repeating the bending step until a desired shape is imparted to said plate; and

articulating the upper die to enable it to adjust articulating to a contour of said plate during each bending thereof thereby limiting bending stress upon said ram.

12. (Original) A method of operating a bending press for the bending of steel plate for the production of large diameter pipe, which comprises the steps of:

placing a steel plate on a lower die on a bed of a bending press in which said lower die comprises a pair of supports enabling said plate to be bent between them;

pressing an upper die against said plate from above at the bottom of a sword-shaped ram driven by a head of the press downwardly to bend said plate; and

articulating said upper die during the bending of said plate so as to minimize a bending moment on said ram.